

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY ROME IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL MILAN

AMCONSUL NAPLES

AMEMBASSY PARIS

UNCLAS STATE 180264

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, IT

SUBJECT: PRESS BRIEFING ON ITALY

1. FOLLOWING IS FULL TEXT OF DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S
REMARKS JULY 20 WITH RESPECT TO ITALY:

QUOTE

Q: BOB, A QUESTION ON ITALY: CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT CAME HERE
AND TOLD REPORTERS ON BACKGROUND ABOUT A FORMULA THAT HAD
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BEEN AGREED TO IN PUERTO RICO WITH REGARD TO FUTURE LOANS
TO ITALY. A WHITE HOUSE PRESS SPOKESMAN IN EFFECT
CONFIRMED THAT -- THE SUBSTANCE OF WHAT SCHMIDT SAID TO
ME -- BY SAYING HE HAD NO QUARREL WITH IT. IS THE STATE

DEPARTMENT GOING TO SAY ANYTHING ABOUT THIS?

A: I WAS ASKED ABOUT THAT YESTERDAY, AND I SAID THERE IS NO SUCH FORMULA THAT -- IT WAS ALLEGED THAT THERE WAS SOME FORMULA THAT WE WOULD AGREE TO SOME SUB-CABINET PARTICIPATION OF COMMUNISTS IN A GOVERNMENT -- AND THAT IS NOT TRUE. THERE IS NO SUCH FORMULA.

Q: WELL WHAT IS THAT --. WAS SCHMIDT MISTAKEN? WERE THE PEOPLE IN THE ADMINISTRATION THAT I SPOKE TO, MISTAKEN?

A: YOU ASKED ME FOR MY REACTION --

Q: YES.

A: -- AND I DO NOT KNOW WHO YOU SPOKE TO. YOU CAN GO BACK AND SPEAK TO YOUR OTHER ADMINISTRATION SOURCES.

Q: I DID.

A: WE HAVE HAD GENERAL DISCUSSIONS ON THIS SUBJECT, BUT I DO NOT HAVE ANYTHING BEYOND THAT.

Q: WAS THE WHITE HOUSE MISTAKEN TOO, IN CONFIRMING IT?

Q: I DON'T FOLLOW WHAT YOU ARE SAYING TO LES.

A: I DO NOT KNOW WHAT THEY CONFIRMED.

Q: I DON'T FOLLOW WHAT YOU ARE SAYING HERE. ARE YOU SAYING, "THERE IS NO SUCH FORMULA", MEANING THAT THERE IS NO SUCH FORMULA FOR DENYING ANY LOANS TO ITALIAN GOVERNMENT WITH COMMUNISTS IN IT? OR THERE IS NO SUCH FORMULA THAT WOULD AGREE TO SOME SUB-CABINET PARTICIPATION -- WHICH ARE YOU SAYING?

A: I THINK THAT -- AND LESLIE, CORRECT ME IF I AM WRONG -- UNCLASSIFIED

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I THINK THAT THE ARTICLE USED THE TERM "FORMULA" IN THE SENSE OR IN THE CONTEXT OF: "IT WOULD BE O.K. IF THERE WERE SUB-CABINET PARTICIPATION IN--".

Q: IF IT WERE AN OBSTACLE TO CONSIDERATION FOR THE LOAN -

A: -- AND WHAT I AM SAYING IS THAT THERE IS NO SUCH FORMULA.

Q: WELL NO -- WHAT I AM ASKING YOU THEN IS, FOR SOME RESPONSE TO THE FUNDAMENTAL ISSUE -- WHICH WAS THAT THERE WAS AGREEMENT THAT THERE WOULD NOT BE LOANS TO GOVERNMENTS WHICH HAD COMMUNISTS IN IT.

Q: IN THE CABINET.

Q: IN THE CABINET.

A: FIRST OF ALL, OUR POSITION ON THE WHOLE QUESTION OF COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION IN NATO GOVERNMENTS IS WELL KNOWN, AND THAT STANDS.

AS FAR AS THE SPECIFIC QUESTION ON FINANCIAL AID IN ITALY

THERE HAVE BEEN GENERAL DISCUSSIONS ON THIS SUBJECT, -- BUT NO AGREEMENT.

Q: IS THAT THE --

Q: WAIT A MINUTE, WAIT A MINUTE --

Q: DOES THE WELL KNOWN POSITION PRECLUDE COMMUNISTS IN SUB-CABINET POSTS? BECAUSE IT IS NOT THAT WELL KNOWN TO ME

A: I JUST ANSWERED THAT QUESTION BEFORE, THAT THERE IS NO SUCH FORMULA.

Q: NO SUCH FORMULA -- YES. BUT DO WE HAVE A GENERAL POSITION AGAINST HAVING COMMUNISTS IN SUB-CABINET POSTS? OR IS IT OUR GENERAL POSITION THAT COMMUNISTS IN CABINET POSTS MAKE THINGS SCRATCHY?
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A: I THINK OUR GENERAL STATEMENTS IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS ON THAT WERE OF A GENERAL NATURE, AND NOT AS SPECIFIC AS YOUR QUESTIONS ARE DIRECTING IT.

Q: WELL THE CHANCELLOR'S STATEMENT WAS QUITE SPECIFIC; ARE YOU TAKING ISSUE WITH THAT?

A: I WAS NOT PRESENT WHEN THIS STATEMENT THE CHANCELLOR ALLEGEDLY MADE, WAS GIVEN. I NOTICED HE WAS ASKED ON THE RECORD ON THAT QUESTION, AND HE DID NOT COMMENT ON, NOR CONFIRM THAT HE HAD MADE SUCH A STATEMENT.

Q: YOU ARE NOW SAYING THERE IS NO SUCH AGREEMENT TO WITHHOLD AID FUNDS FROM ITALY SHOULD THERE BE A COMMUNIST IN THE CABINET. IS THAT WHAT YOU ARE SAYING?

A: WHAT I AM SAYING IS THAT WE HAVE HAD GENERAL DISCUSSION ON THAT SUBJECT.

Q: WELL YOU THEN WENT ON TO SAY THAT THERE WAS NO AGREEMENT. NO AGREEMENT TO WHAT?

A: RESTATE YOUR QUESTION, PLEASE.

Q: THAT THERE HAD BEEN GENERAL DISCUSSIONS BUT NO AGREEMENT, IS WHAT YOU SAID. NO AGREEMENT TO DO WHAT?

A: THAT WAS IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION THAT THERE WAS SOME AGREEMENT RELATING TO TERMS OF FINANCIAL --

Q: I DIDN'T TALK ABOUT AN AGREEMENT. I TALKED ABOUT AN

"INFORMAL UNDERSTANDING" AMONG THE PARTIES.

A: THERE IS ANOTHER QUESTION HERE, LESLIE --

Q: BUT I AM SAYING AN "INFORMAL UNDERSTANDING."

A: I AM SAYING THAT WE HAVE HAD GENERAL DISCUSSIONS ON THE SUBJECT.

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Q: BUT BEYOND THAT, WAS THERE AN INFORMAL UNDERSTANDING ON A BILATERAL BASIS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND SOME OF THE OTHER PARTIES AT THE PUERTO RICAN CONFERENCE ON ITALY?

A: I AM NOT REALLY ABLE TO GO BEYOND, AND SAY MORE THAN THAT WE HAVE HAD GENERAL DISCUSSIONS --

Q: YOU ARE DENYING ONE THING AND IMPLYING THAT YOU ARE DENYING EVERYTHING.

Q: I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS YOU ARE DENYING, FRANKLY. I WISH YOU'D BE MORE SPECIFIC.

Q: NOR DO I.

Q: I WISH YOU WOULD BE MORE SPECIFIC HERE, BECAUSE TWO THINGS HAVE GOTTEN MIXED UP IN THE WHOLE CONVERSATION: ONE IS ABOUT CABINET LEVEL PARTICIPATION. AND THE OTHER IS ABOUT SUB-CABINET LEVEL PARTICIPATION. NOW ARE YOU SAYING THAT IT IS THE UNITED STATES POSITION THAT THERE IS NO AGREEMENT ON WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF AN ITALIAN GOVERNMENT WITH COMMUNISTS IN IT APPLIED FOR A LOAN?

A: YES.

Q: THERE IS NO US POSITION ON WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IN THAT CASE?

A: NOW YOU HAVE CHANGED YOUR QUESTION, IF I UNDERSTAND IT. WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST QUESTION?

Q: MY QUESTION IS: YOU SAY, OR YOU HAVE SAID THERE IS NO UNDERSTANDING. I AM TRYING TO FIND OUT "NO UNDERSTANDING ABOUT WHAT?" IS IT: THERE IS NO UNDERSTANDING AS TO WHAT THE UNITED STATES WOULD DO IF THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT WITH COMMUNISTS IN THE CABINET, APPLIED FOR A LOAN? OR, THERE IS AN UNDERSTANDING ABOUT THAT. IT HAS TO BE EITHER ONE WAY OR ANOTHER.

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A: THE QUESTION RELATED TO THE HYPOTHETICAL SITUATION THAT IF YOU HAD AN ITALIAN GOVERNMENT WITH COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION AND IT ASKED FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.

Q: RIGHT.

A: AND THE QUESTION WAS: WAS THERE AN AGREEMENT ON THIS SUBJECT? AND I SAID, NO, THERE WASN'T, TO MY KNOWLEDGE. WE HAVE HAD GENERAL DISCUSSIONS ON THIS SUBJECT. I ALSO RECALLED THAT OUR POSITION ON THE QUESTION OF COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION IN NATO GOVERNMENTS IS WELL KNOWN.

AND THEN THE OTHER QUESTION: "IS THERE SOME FORMULA WHERE WE WOULD THINK IT WAS O.K. IF THERE WERE SUB-CABINET PARTICIPATION." AND I SAID NO SUCH FORMULA EXISTED

Q: LET ME ASK SOME SPECIFIC QUESTIONS:

(A) IS IT THE POSITION OF THE UNITED STATES THAT IF THERE ARE COMMUNISTS IN THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT WE WOULD NOT BE A PARTY TO FURTHER LOANS TO SUCH A GOVERNMENT?

A: I SAID THAT WE HAVE HAD GENERAL DISCUSSIONS ON THE SUBJECT, BUT NO --

Q: NO, I'M NOT -- I AM ASKING: WHAT IS THE UNITED STATES' POSITION? IF COMMUNISTS PARTICIPATE IN THE CABINET, WE WOULDN'T PROVIDE LOANS TO A GOVERNMENT CONTROLLED BY THAT CABINET.

A: I THINK I AM GOING TO FALL BACK AND SAY THAT IS A HYPOTHETICAL QUESTION. I HAVE STATED OUR GENERAL POSITION. I AM NOT PREPARED TO ANSWER THAT.

Q: BUT WE HAVE A POSITION ON THAT, DON'T WE -- THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT?

A: WE HAVE A POSITION ON OUR ATTITUDE ON THE QUESTION OF COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION. I AM NOT AWARE THAT WE HAVE ADDRESSED SPECIFIC EVENTS THAT MIGHT FLOW FROM THAT.

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Q: WELL WHAT IS OUR ATTITUDE, THEN, WITH RESPECT TO PARTICIPATING IN FURTHER LOANS TO COMMUNIST GOVERNMENTS -- OR CABINETS WITH COMMUNISTS IN THE CABINET?

A: WE HAVE NOT BEEN CONFRONTED WITH THAT PROBLEM YET, AND I DO NOT THINK WE ARE PREPARED TO ANSWER --

Q: YOU HAVE AN ATTITUDE, THOUGH. WHAT IS THAT ATTITUDE?

A: I THINK I SAID OUR ATTITUDE WAS IN TERMS OF THE GENERAL QUESTION OF COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION IN NATO GOVERNMENTS.

Q: AND YOU SAID THIS WAS "DISCUSSED" AT THE PUERTO RICAN CONFERENCE.

A: WE HAVE HAD GENERAL DISCUSSIONS ON THE SUBJECT, BUT I AM NOT PREPARED TO GO BEYOND THAT.

Q: IN THOSE DISCUSSIONS, DID WE ADVANCE A FORMULA -- BOTH WITH A POLITICAL SIDE AND AN ECONOMIC SIDE?

A: I AM JUST NOT ABLE TO CHARACTERIZE THEM OTHER THAN JUST TO CONFIRM THAT WE HAD GENERAL DISCUSSIONS ON THE SUBJECT.

Q: LET ME -- IN TERMS OF YOUR DENIAL -- YOU ARE NOT DENYING THAT THERE IS SOME KIND OF UNDERSTANDING AMONG THE UNITED STATES, GREAT BRITAIN, FRANCE AND GERMANY -- THAT THERE WILL BE NO FURTHER FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT IF THERE ARE --

A: ALL --

Q: -- IF THERE ARE COMMUNISTS IN THE CABINET.

A: ALL I AM SAYING IS, WE HAVE HAD GENERAL DISCUSSIONS ON THE SUBJECT.

Q: YOU ARE NOT DENYING THAT?

A: AND I AM NOT PREPARED TO GO BEYOND THAT.
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Q: YOU ARE NOT DENYING THAT?

A: I AM NOT CONFIRMING IT, EITHER.

Q: ALL RIGHT --

A: BUT I AM DESCRIBING THE CONSIDERATION OF THIS SUBJECT
AS OUR HAVING HAD GENERAL DISCUSSION ON THE SUBJECT.

Q: WHAT IT APPEARS IS THAT YOU OBJECT, YOU TAKE EXCEPTION
TO THE DESCRIPTION OF WHATEVER THE GENERAL UNDERSTANDING
HAS LED TO, AS A FORMULA.

A: YES.

Q: SO THAT YOU DON'T WANT TO BE IN A POSITION OF

CONDONING COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION IN A SUB-CABINET OR
PARLIAMENTARY LEVEL.

A: THAT IS CORRECT.

Q: BOB, I WOULD LIKE TO COME BACK TO ITALY FOR A MOMENT.

A: YES.

Q: HAVE WE COMMUNICATED TO CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS, OR ANY
OTHER NON-COMMUNIST PARTIES IN ITALY, OUR POSITION, ATTITUD
OR WHATEVER OTHER ROGET'S THESAURUS WORD WE CAN THINK OF
WITH RESPECT TO PARTICIPATING IN FURTHER LOANS TO AN
ITALIAN GOVERNMENT THAT INCLUDED COMMUNISTS IN THE CABINET?

A: I DO NOT THINK THE ISSUE HAS EVER BEEN RAISED.

Q: WE HAVE NOT COMMUNICATED OUR POSITION ON THIS TO ANY
CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS, WHETHER OR NOT THE COMMUNIST PARTY
(INAUDIBLE)?

A: IN THE FIRST PLACE, I HAVE NOT CONFIRMED THAT WE HAVE
A POSITION. SO IF WE HAVE NOT CONFIRMED THAT WE HAD A
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POSITION, THEN HOW CAN WE COMMUNICATE A POSITION?

Q: YOU HAVE CONFIRMED THAT THE ISSUE WAS DISCUSSED. HOW
CAN YOU DISCUSS AN ISSUE UNLESS YOU HAVE A POSITION ON IT?

A: NORMALLY, PEOPLE HAVE DISCUSSIONS BEFORE THEY REACH
CONCLUSIONS.

Q: WITH OTHER GOVERNMENTS?

Q: ARE YOU DISCUSSING IT WITHOUT A POSITION?

A: PARDON ME?

Q: YOU SAY UNITED STATES HAS NO POSITION --

A: I THINK WE ARE GETTING INTO A SEMANTIC EXCHANGE HERE, LESLIE.

Q: NO, IT'S NOT SEMANTIC. THIS IS A BASIC QUESTION ABOUT WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO WITH RESPECT TO COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION IN THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT. HERE, A FOREIGN LEADER COMES TO THE UNITED STATES AND TELLS AMERICAN REPORTERS ON BACKGROUND ONE THING -- AND THAT STATEMENT IS IN EFFECT CONFIRMED BY THE WHITE HOUSE -- AND HERE YOU ARE TRYING TO USE SEMANTICS IN ORDER TO DENY THAT.

A: I AM NOT USING SEMANTICS. I SAID EXACTLY WHAT OUR RESPONSE IS TO QUESTIONS.

Q: BOB, DOES THE ADMINISTRATION HAVE A POSITION WITH RESPECT TO THE ECONOMIC CONDITIONS THAT MIGHT BE PLACED ON ANY FURTHER LOANS TO AN ITALIAN GOVERNMENT?

A: YOU KNOW, THAT QUESTION HAS BEEN ASKED SIX DIFFERENT WAYS, LESLIE, AND MY ANSWER IS THE SAME.

Q: I AM SPEAKING ABOUT ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, NOT POLITICAL ONES.

A: I AM SAYING THAT WE DISCUSSED -- THE SUBJECT HAS BEEN UNCLASSIFIED

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DISCUSSED. OUR POSITION ON PARTICIPATION OF COMMUNISTS IN NATO GOVERNMENTS IS WELL KNOWN AND I HAVE DENIED THE EXISTENCE OF A FORMULA. NOW THAT IS WHAT MY ANSWERS HAVE BEEN; AND YOU KNOW, YOU HAVE ASKED THE SAME QUESTION SIX DIFFERENT WAYS AND THE ANSWER IS STILL THE SAME.

Q: BUT YOU HAVE NOT DENIED THE EXISTENCE OF AN INFORMAL UNDERSTANDING -- FURTHER TO WHAT YOU WERE SAYING.

A: BUT I HAVE DESCRIBED THE CONSIDERATION OF THE SUBJECT TO THE POINT THAT THERE HAVE BEEN DISCUSSIONS. I CANNOT GO BEYOND THAT.

Q: THANK YOU. UNQUOTE. KISSINGER

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